(c) With a view to offset the strain of foreign exchange coming in the way of import of edible oil, to the extent possible, the Government is presently considering the proposal of export of milk powder lying surplus with NDDB against import of palmolein.

(d) The Government has already adopted a multi-pronged strategy to increase the production of edible oils which includes, besides others the following:—

(i) Implementation of projects like NODP and OPTP providing assistance to oil growing States for critical inputs like improved seeds, plant protection, irrigation and extension of technology;

(ii) increase in area under non-traditional oilseeds crops, like soyabean and sunflower and exploitation of oilseeds of tree and forest origin and rice bran etc.;

(iii) intensification of research efforts for increasing productivity of oilseeds;

(iv) better incentives to farmers through fixation of minimum support prices for edible oilseeds; and

(v) setting up of Technology Mission on Oilseeds production.

Increase in the Speed of Express Trains

1183. SHRI S.K.T. RAMACHANDRAN: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any proposal under Government's consideration to speed up the Express Trains i.e. (i) Madras-Quilon and Quilon-Madras Mails, (ii) Madras-Tirunelveli and Tirunelveli-Madras Express, (iii) Pearl City Express Madras to Tuticorin, and (iv) Madras to Madurai Pandyan Express;

(b) what steps are being taken by Government to minimise accidents due to the un-manned gates; and

(c) whether Government have any programme to convert all the un-manned gates to manned ones in the country?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI AJAY SINGH): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Some of the important steps being taken to prevent accidents at un-manned level crossing gates are as under;—

(1) Provision of whistle boards and rumble strips/speed breakers and road signs at the approaches of level crossings.

(2) Improving visibility at level crossings for road users and train drivers.

(3) Educative campaigns through public media including Doordarshan and Radio to educate road users on the precautions to be taken at level crossings.

(c) Manning of existing unmanned Level Crossings is undertaken by Railways only if sponsored by the State Government/Local Authority duly consenting to bear the cost thereof as per rules However, manning of such of the level crossings, which are considered hazardous on account of their having restricted visibility and/or high density of traffic is undertaken by Railways on their own at Railways' cost.

Encouragement for joint farming

1184. SHRI S.K T. RAMACHANDRAN: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether any proposal is under Government's consideration to encourage small farmers to come into the fold of joint farming;

(b) if so, what are the incentives proposed to be given to the farmers into joint farming;

(c) the number of Co-operative Farming Societies in the country; and

(d) whether these societies are making any profits or in loss?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND COOPERATION IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI NITISH KUMAR): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) and (d) According to the latest information brought out by NABARD as on 30th June, 1988, total number of co-operative farming societies was 8062.

While majority of these societies either are dormant or running in loss, only about 15 per cent of the societies are running in profit

Augmentation of Housing Facilities in Metropolitan Cities

1185. SHRI S.K.T. RAMACHANDRAN: Will the Minister of URBAN DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) what are the steps contemplated by Government to augment housing facilities in view of the rapid increase in the population of the four major cities Delhi, Bombay, Calcutta and Madras;

(b) whether Government have any scheme to keep these cities free from surface contamination and air pollution;

(c) what steps are being taken by Government to provide alternate housing facilities to slum dwellers; and

(d) whether Government would take concrete steps to clear all the slums in the major cities?

THE MINISTER OF URBAN DEVELOPMENT (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN): (a) Housing is a State subject. The draft National Housing Policy (NHP envisages various steps for augmenting the supply of land, infrastructure, materials and finance in order to expand housing facilities by way of construction or upgradation, and to create an enabling environment for housing activity by different income groups.

Following are some of the steps initiated to augment housing facilities in metropolitan cities:

1. Centrally Sponsored Pavement Dwellers Scheme to provide night shelter and sanitary facilities.

2. A special centrally financed scheme of Rs. 100 crores in Bombay for slum improvement and redevelopment.

3. Special allocation by the 9th Finance Commission to Bombay and Calcutta.

4. Allotment of plots to Group Housing Societies.

5. Additional Plan assistance through World Bank aided projects for Bombay, Calcutta and Madras for the increased provision of developed sites and urban infrastructure with special emphasis on the poorer families.

6. Major ongoing scheme for environmental improvement of slums by State and municipal agencies and a central scheme of urban basic services.

7. Support to upgradation of houses and inner city renewal.

8. Expansion of housing finance from NHB, HUDCO, HDFC, LIC, GIC Commercial Banks and newly set up regional HFI's.

9. Steps to amend inhibiting laws and regulations in the way of increased land supply or rental housing.

10. Increased supply of innovative building materials and training of skilled workers.

11. Improving the efficiency and orientation of housing agencies and involvement of NGOs and communities.

(b) The steps taken by the Government to check pollution in the metropolitan cities include the following:

(i) Emission standards have been prescribed

(ii) Ambient air quality standards have been evolved;

(iii) A network of ambient air-quality monitoring stations has been set up.

(iv) National standards for exhaust from automobiles have been laid down for the vehicles on the road and for vehicles at manufacturing stage and enforcement procedures have been prescribed.

(v) Air pollution control areas have been notified.

(vi) Environmental guidelines have been evolved for siting and operation of industries.